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ACTION ARA-10

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E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: SHUM AR OVIP (DERIAN, PATRICIA)  
SUBJECT: VISIT OF COORDINATOR FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN  
AFFAIRS

FOR ASST. SECY TODMAN

I AM PLEASED AND GRATEFUL THAT MS. DERIAN TOOK TIME FROM HER HEAVY RESPONSIBILITIES IN WASHINGTON TO SPEND NEARLY A WEEK WITH US IN BUENOS AIRES. IN A FOUR-DAY PERIOD SHE WAS EXPOSED TO A WIDE RANGE OF INFORMED OPINION ON THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION AND ON THE TERRORIST AND HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM IN ARGENTINA. SHE WAS REMARKABLY PATIENT AND RECEPTIVE AND CONSISTENTLY IMPRESSED HER INTERLOCUTORS WITH HER FORTHRIGHTNESS, SINCERITY AND DEEP DEDICATION TO HUMAN RIGHTS OBSERVANCE. SHE WAS EFFECTIVE IN CONVINCING WARY AND EVEN BELLIGERENT SKEPTICS HERE THAT THE ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY STEMS FROM TRADITIONAL AMERICAN VALUES AND WAS NEITHER A SELECTIVE NOR TRANSITORY EXERCISE. ARGENTINE OFFICIALS WERE GRATEFUL AND REASSURED THAT SHE CAME TO ARGENTINA TO HEAR AND OBSERVE THE SITUATION FIRSTHAND AND THAT SHE WAS WILLING TO GIVE THEM A FULL AND FAIR HEARING. INDEED, THEY WERE FLATTERED THAT ARGENTINA WAS THE FIRST COUNTRY SHE VISITED SINCE ASSUMING HER NEW RESPONSIBILITIES. WHILE HERE SHE MET WITH LEADERS OF BOTH THE RADICAL AND PERONIST PARTIES; REPRESENTATIVES OF THE JEWISH, CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT FAITHS; ARGENTINE AND AMERICAN JOURNALISTS; OFFICERS FROM OTHER FOREIGN EMBASSIES; THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS; THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH

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COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES; THE MILITARY SECRETARY-GENERAL TO THE PRESIDENT; ARGENTINE AND AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN; THE ARGENTINE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS; ARGENTINE EDUCATORS AND WRITERS AND AN ARGENTINE HISTORIAN-SOCIOLOGIST. FACED WITH A

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DEMANDING AND EXHAUSTING SCHEDULE, MS. DERIAN DID NOT MISS ANY OPPORTUNITY TO LISTEN TO AND ASSESS THE VIEWS AND ATTITUDES OF ARGENTINE CITIZENS, AMERICANS AND OTHER FOREIGN CITIZENS LIVING AND WORKING HERE ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE US HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY. THE EMBASSY AMERICAN STAFF WAS PARTICULARLY GRATIFIED BY HER INVITATION TO MEET FOR A BRIEFING AND OPEN AND FRANK DISCUSSION ON THE ISSUE. SHE ENCOURAGED PLAIN SPEAKING AND ANSWERED QUESTIONS FORTHRIGHTLY, POINTING OUT FREQUENTLY TO HER AUDIENCES THAT PUNITIVE SANCTIONS WOULD NOT BE VIEWED AS A SOLUTION, BUT RATHER AS A SIGN THAT THE US HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY HAD FAILED IN THAT IT HAS NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS OBSERVANCE IN CREATIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE WAYS. I BELIEVE THE TRIP WAS VERY USEFUL IN RE-EMPHASIZING THE ADMINISTRATION'S FIRM COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS IN A POSTIVE AND UNDERSTANDING SPIRIT. MS. DERIAN'S EFFORTS HERE WERE COMMENDABLE AND MUCH APPRECIATED AND THIS EMBASSY LOOKS FORWARD TO WORKING WITH HER IN THE FUTURE.  
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